

## Fallen Heroes:

### *1-227th Apache Pilots Honored for Their Sacrifice*

By Spc. Andy Miller

122nd MPAD

CAMP COOKE— It was Easter Sunday in Iraq. A coalition convoy moved through the streets of Baghdad, west of the international airport. The Soldiers came under enemy fire. They responded, and suddenly were locked in a fire-fight.

Someone called in for air support. Moments later, an Apache attack helicopter responded. 30-millimeter cannons immediately ripped into enemy positions. The convoy was saved. The helicopter, though, went down.

Inside were Chief Warrant Officer 3 Wesley "Chuck" Fortenberry and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Lawrence "Shane" Colton, AH-64D Apache pilots from 1st Battalion 227th Regiment (Attack Helicopter), Task Force Attack. These two Apache pilots paid the ultimate price for their country and their comrades that day.

In honor of these Soldiers, a memorial took place at a battalion aircraft hangar on Camp Cooke the following Tuesday.

"Today's memorial service was all about honoring two of our American heroes who gave their lives," Lt. Col. Ronald Lewis, the 1-227 Battalion commander said following the ceremony. "Today was about saying thank you to them and making sure that everyone hears their story, knows their



Photos by Spc. Andy Miller, 122nd MPAD

**Members of 1st Battalion 227th Regiment (Attack Helicopter) are led by Spc. David Boyd, an attack helicopter repair mechanic, to the front of the ceremony to pay their respects to Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chuck Fortenberry and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane Colton during a memorial service held in their honor.**

heroic acts and knows that what they did was right and proper. Like them, any one of us would respond to contact like that again tomorrow."

American ground forces moving through Iraqi streets are under constant threat of attack. It's a comfort for these Soldiers on the ground to know there are attack helicopters ready to help them at a moments notice.

"I had several members of the ground unit that they [Fortenberry and Colton] supported here today," Lewis said. "They said 'I just wanted to come by and say thank you.' They told me they were down to their last few rounds, and that our Soldiers saved their lives."

The Soldiers saved Easter Sunday by the selfless acts of Fortenberry and Colton will

probably never forget the sacrifice they made that day. The two pilots remain in the hearts of those who knew them best.

"The aviators that I work with have a sense of brotherhood that few will ever understand," Chief Warrant Officer 2 Justin Tyler, an AH-64D pilot said. "When one of our own falls, you have to be there to honor them. Our prayers are with their families. We fly, day to day, for them."



## ▶ Apache Pilots Make the Ultimate Sacrifice



By Spc. Andy Miller, 122nd MPAD

A memorial at Camp Cooke honors the lives of Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chuck Fortenberry and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Shane Colton. The two AH-64D Apache attack helicopter pilots died Easter Sunday while providing support to ground troops in a coalition convoy west of Baghdad International Airport.

Thursday

High: 94  
Low: 70

Friday

High: 82  
Low: 58

Saturday

High: 78  
Low: 54



# Spur The Moment

## What do you miss most about the States?

"Family and just being able to get in my car and go somewhere."



**SPC Jessica Kern,  
HHC 4BCT**

"My wife. My Mustang."



**SSG Keith Moerbe,  
239th MI**

"Being able to go home after a hard day's work."



**SGT Rene Zamora,  
A Plt., 2-7 Cav**

"Family would be number one, and the beaches of Hawaii."



**CW2 Aaron Dotson,  
B Co., 1-25 5 Avn**



# Professional, Polite & Prepared to Kill



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## All in the Family

## Father &amp; Son Patrol Baghdad Together

By Pfc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

CAMP BLACK JACK—Most fathers spend quality time with their sons by going fishing or maybe to baseball games, but one 2nd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) father-son pair goes on combat missions together here.

"In my active duty years I never got the chance to get deployed like this, so I figured I might as well come out here with my son," said Sgt. Norman French, a National Guardsman from Texas' 49th Armor Division, now a radio and telephone operator for 2nd BCT Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

"I don't know what the chances are that we got stationed in the same brigade, but I know they have to be pretty slim," said Spc. Ryan French, a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) team leader in Headquarters Support Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd BCT.

Though they are both in the same brigade, their different military occupations keep them separated often. Still, when they are together, it's special.

"We get to go on patrols together every now and then, but it's hard for me to get out of the [tactical operations center]," the elder French said. "It's not terribly unusual to have a father and a son in the same brigade, but to actually be going on patrols together is something."

You might think that hav-



Photo courtesy of Sgt. Norman French, HHC 2BCT

**FATHER AND SON -- Sgt. Norman French (left) and Spc. Ryan French, both with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, live only 150 yards apart on Camp Black Jack.**

ing family members serving together thousands of miles from home is unusual, but this isn't a first-time event for this pair.

"One time, I was going to visit Ryan's step-mother in the Ukraine, and I had a layover in Frankfurt," Sgt. French said. "Ryan was stationed there, and he showed me around. It was great because I had lived there when I was a little kid when my dad was ... in the Air Force."

The fact that both father and son are in the same brigade wasn't entirely fate. Spc. French has been in the Army for six years. He spent his first tour in Germany then requested to go to Fort Hood for his next duty station to be close to his home of Austin, Texas.

The opportunity for Sgt. French to join his son's

brigade came while he was working as a government service employee for the state of Texas, in Austin. A liaison unit from Austin was attached to 1st Cavalry for this deployment, but they were under strength. Sgt. French volunteered to go with them. When the unit was split among the First Team brigades, the elder French found himself serving, and living near his son.

"I was put in 2nd Brigade by dumb luck," Sgt. French said. "Now Ryan's trailer is only about 150 yards from mine. The ability to talk to your own son is a pleasure that can't be easily replaced, and it makes being on the other side of the world [far] from home all the more easier."

There are a lot of stressors that build up on deployments.

Having family close by is a luxury not available to many troops.

"Most everyone here is away from their families and it's hard, especially for the married people," the elder French noted. "They are completely out of their fish tank so to speak," added Sgt. French. "[Ryan and I] can still get together and have father-son talks. It makes us feel like we are back home."

Aside from the experience of a lifetime, Sgt. French volunteered as a way to spend quality time alongside his eldest son.

"A big reason I volunteered to come here was to serve with my son," he said. "I more or less made him join the Army, and now he's gone to war. It's only fair that I go with him."



## Trigger Pull:

## A First of Many Columns (Unless I Get Fired For This One)

MSG Dave  
Larsen1CD  
Public Affairs  
Office

## Commentary

I was driving home from work after another long day of pre-deployment preparation back in early March, listening to National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," when I heard Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Ellen Goodman of the Boston Globe talk about writing an award-winning column.

Goodman provided an anecdote during her broadcast interview.

One day, she said, her young daughter had a friend over to the house to play. Ellen was in her study banging away at a computer for her next syn-

dicated column. The playmate asked Goodman's daughter, "What exactly does your Mom do for a living?"

The answer: "She gets paid to give everyone her opinion."

Well, that's what this column will do, too, though I'm not a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, nor will I cover the social ills of American culture as Ellen Goodman does with such flair.

Since leaving home, I totally missed March Madness. Maybe you did, too. Just to fill you in: the University of Connecticut won both the men and women's NCAA Basketball Championships. Diana Taurasi is UConn's best player, male or female, even though the National Basketball Association won't draft her.

More recently, San Francisco Giant slugger Barry Bonds tied and surpassed his godfather, hall-of-fame center

fielder Willie Mays, as the third-most prolific home run hitter of all time.

Bonds is a unique individual. Most baseball writers hate him. His hometown fans love him, and so do the fans in every other major league city because of his habit of choking in the play-offs.

It is baseball season, and I feel honor-bound to pick my favorites to win the whole shebang come October.

First, I can tell you who WON'T win: my homies, the Milwaukee Brewers! You know, the team that Seattle wouldn't support in the early '70s?

My editor says that I'm running out of time, so here goes: the New York Yankees win it all. The Chicago Cubs win the National League pennant, and then become loveable losers again in the fall classic.

Hopefully this column is opinionated enough for you.

It's all about sports. My boss has told me that I can't write a sports column without mentioning Seattle (for the CG to read - did it, sir!) and boxing, because he used to be a boxer and promoter.

OK, here goes: the current state of professional boxing stinks.

The last true great heavy-weight champ was probably Larry Holmes. I'm pretty unimpressed with the sport these days (sir!).

This column went so long today thanks to our friends at G-6, who lost NIPRNET last night. We had to fill with something!

I (we) encourage your opinions. Send your cards, letters and fan mail to: [david.j.larsen@us.army.mil](mailto:david.j.larsen@us.army.mil). We will always consider printing all letters to the editor, or this column. Stay tuned. (I told you I was no Pulitzer Prize winner!).

## TV GUIDE

	AFN ATLANTIC	AFN PACIFIC	AFN Sports	AFN Spectrum
<b>18:00</b>	Pokemon: Johto League Champ./ Jackie Chan Adventures	Tonight Show/ The Late Show 18:30	NHL - Playoffs- Colorado Avalanche @ Dallas Stars 17:00	Masterpiece Theater 17:00
<b>19:00</b>	Jeopardy/ Headline News	Access Hollywood 19:30	Sportscenter	The Wild Thornberrys/ The Fairly Oddparents
<b>20:00</b>	ESPNNews/ Headline News	No Way Out	ESPNNews/ Baseball Tonight 20:20	The Simpsons/ The Cosby Show
<b>21:00</b>	Friends/ Scrubs 21:25/ Reel Time 21:50		Sportscenter	American Idol
<b>22:00</b>	The Bachelor	Young Man With a Horn	Motorcycle Racing	The West Wing

Today in History  
April 15

► From [historychannel.com](http://historychannel.com)

1865 President Lincoln dies  
1912 RMS *Titanic* sinks  
1927 First footsteps left at Grauman's Chinese Theater  
1940 English author and politician Jeffrey Archer is born  
1959 Castro visits the U.S.  
1970 U.S. 1st Infantry Division withdraws from Vietnam  
1990 Ava Gardner dies  
1998 Pol Pot dies